

## June 2009 - Ike - An Exceptional Man for an Extraordinary Time

### IKE - AN EXCEPTIONAL MAN FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME

By Congressman Jerry Moran

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This weekend marks the 65th Anniversary of D-Day - the largest amphibious assault in history and a key turning point in World War II. As we honor those veterans who contributed to the success of the assault, I am reminded that D-Day was also a defining moment for one of Kansas' favorite sons, Dwight D. Eisenhower. As Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, Eisenhower was the man most responsible for the planning and execution of the D-Day invasion.

It is difficult for us to imagine the fate of so many rested on a single person, a single decision. But that responsibility is exactly what Eisenhower faced on D-Day as he ordered the invasion of Normandy. He felt the full weight of the lives he knew would be lost in the effort and the consequences of failure. Yet Eisenhower never avoided the enormous responsibility before him. In fact, Ike prepared a message to be used in the event the invasion failed. In this message, he placed any blame for the failure on himself alone. For his troops he claimed "bravery and devotion to duty," but for himself only responsibility.

When D-Day succeeded and Eisenhower was honored by the citizens of London, he stated, "Humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim earned in blood of his followers and sacrifices of his friends." That was Eisenhower's brand of leadership: responsibility in the face of failure and humility in the glory of success.

Eight years after D-Day, the slogan "I Like Ike" was catapulting Eisenhower to the presidency. As President, Eisenhower sought a lasting peace, hoping that the sacrifices of his troops would not be necessary again. And indeed, as Eisenhower said, "The United States never lost a soldier or a foot of ground in my administration."

But President Eisenhower did more than keep the peace. He opened new paths of freedom with the Interstate Highway System and the integration of Little Rock High School. Internationally he stood up to enemies and friends alike, keeping not only peace, but peace with justice. He took America into space and founded NASA. In fact, in 1957, Eisenhower recorded the message of peace that beamed down from the world's first communications satellite. He earned the trust of the country and the world by being a consistent model of decisive, pragmatic, and just leadership.

Eisenhower's unique leadership needs to be remembered today more than ever. I am proud to be part of a twelve-member commission working to create a national memorial to President Eisenhower in Washington, D.C. The Commission recently selected world-renowned architect Frank Gehry to be its lead designer. President Eisenhower represents the best of America and the National Eisenhower Memorial will reflect Ike's great legacy and his optimism for Americans. It is my hope that his memorial will inspire America to remember its proud history and bright future.

A series of commemorative events in honor of D-Day are being held this weekend at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas. As we pause to remember those who gave their lives on a foreign beach 65 years ago, my hope is that we will reflect on the principled leadership, conviction, and commitment shown by Eisenhower. We currently face tough and uncertain times ourselves, but in these times it is important that we remember Ike's words - "America is exactly as strong as the initiative, courage, understanding and loyalty of the individual citizen."

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